

Biographical Sketch

Charles S. Neer, II, MD (1917–2011)

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Published online: 11 June 2011
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Abstract This biographical sketch on Charles S. Neer corresponds to the historic text, *The Classic: Articular Replacement for the Humeral Head* (1955), available at DOI [10.1007/s11999-011-1944-5](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11999-011-1944-5).

Dr. Charles Neer, II, was born and raised in Vinita, Oklahoma in 1917, the son and grandson of physicians [1, 2, 5]. He graduated from Dartmouth College and obtained his MD degree from the University of Pennsylvania. He began a residency at Presbyterian Hospital, New York City, but his training was interrupted by WWII, where he served in three theaters. After the war, he returned to Columbia University to complete his residency, and then joined the faculty, where he remained throughout his career. He retired as an Emeritus Professor in 1990 and returned to his hometown.

Dr. Neer was a prolific writer, having published his first paper on hip fractures in 1948, and his last full paper in 1992. While he wrote on many topics, the majority related to the shoulder. In 1968, Dr. Neer organized a symposium for CORR titled “The Clavicle” [7]. Those papers reviewed the development and anatomy of the clavicle, and the treatment of various injuries. He was a founding member and the first president of the American Shoulder and Elbow Surgeons in 1982, and served on the American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery, the Board of Trustees of The Journal of Shoulder and Elbow Surgery, and the International Board of Shoulder and Elbow Surgery. Among his best

known works is a classification of shoulder fractures reported in 1970 [8] and still widely used today. However, he made many other contributions, including an understanding of the impingement syndrome and a procedure to alleviate the impingement [9]. One of his legacies is the large number of individuals he trained, many of whom actively contribute to orthopaedic surgery in general, and shoulder surgery in particular.

Neer was a pioneer in shoulder arthroplasty, and developed the first practical and widely used prosthesis for the shoulder [6]. (Gluck in 1891 [3, 4] and Péan in 1897 [10, 11] reported the use of shoulder arthroplasty, but

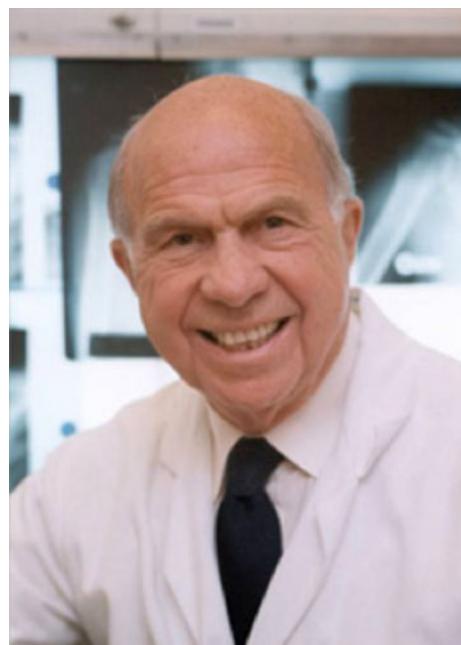


Fig. 1 Dr. Charles S. Neer, II, MD is shown (Reprinted by permission from the American Shoulder and Elbow Surgeons).

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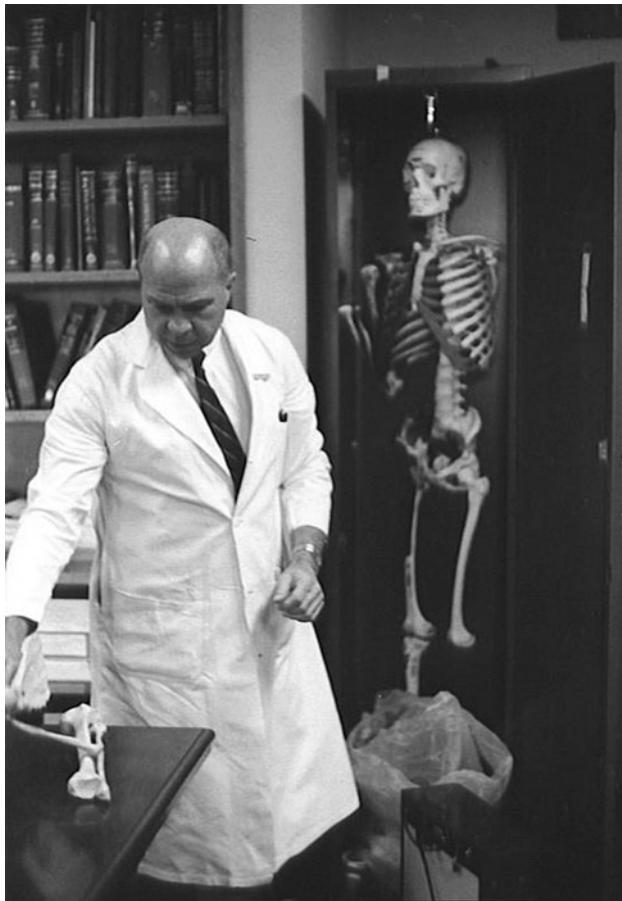


Fig. 2 Dr. Charles Neer is shown in his office circa 1955.

neither of their approaches appear to have been subsequently used by others.) In the article we republish in this issue, Neer described his rationale: Patients with comminuted fractures of the proximal humerus treated by open reduction and internal fixation, or resection arthroplasty, or arthrodesis all had “unsatisfactory” outcomes. He reasoned

replacement of the humeral articular surface provided better pain relief and function, and designed a device and surgical technique for implantation. Neer reported 12 patients in his initial series, all of whom had acute or long standing “extra-articular extrusion and detachment of the humeral head or a long-standing painful incongruity of the humeral articulation.” Eleven of the 12 patients had pain relief, the exception being a patient with “improper seating of the prosthesis.”

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